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**TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS WITH ATTENTION  
DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD)**

MA thesis

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## ABSTRACT

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) has been extensively studied, yet teachers' lack of knowledge in the subject may often impede the progress of ADHD students at school. Different symptoms of ADHD may cause these students to experience difficulties in learning English, and these obstacles also hinder progress in other subjects as well. In order to successfully teach English to students with the characteristics of ADHD, several aspects need to be considered.

The aim of the thesis is to learn how English is taught to ADHD students in Estonia. Based on secondary sources, an overview is given of the most common symptoms of ADHD, behavioural peculiarities of ADHD students, and aspects of teaching children with impairments associated with ADHD. The thesis focuses on four areas of interest in the case of teaching English to students with ADHD: ADHD symptoms in girls and boys and consequent difficulties experienced while learning English, productive teaching strategies and methods, successful behaviour management methods, and effective teaching resources.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with three teachers of English to students diagnosed with ADHD in Estonia. Recorded interviews were transcribed verbatim and coded for analysis, for which 5 main themes and 38 sub-themes were generated. The results are given according to the main themes and the discussion summarises the main findings based on research questions. The most important aspects of teaching English to ADHD students are highlighted based on the experiences of the three teachers of English to students with ADHD. Following the discussion, an overview of methods used to teach English to ADHD students and suggestions are provided.

Teachers of English to ADHD students may find the information in the present thesis useful. The skill of teaching such students is becoming increasingly important due to the increase in the number of students diagnosed with ADHD. English teachers need to have a holistic understanding of ADHD in order to choose effective methods to teach English and develop the students' general competences necessary for other subjects and for becoming successful members of society.

The most important findings are summarised in the conclusion, which is followed by the list of references and appendices.

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## INTRODUCTION

Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) is commonly known as a condition when a person has problems with concentration and impulsive behaviour. Learning English, however, requires the ability to focus and control oneself.

Reports have stated that the number of children diagnosed with ADHD is increasing in the USA (NIMH n.d.a: para. 1; Novotney 2014: para. 2; Schwarz and Cohen 2013), therefore, teachers are probably noticing the trend manifest itself in their classrooms. Due to the different characteristics an ADHD student may find it difficult to follow instructions in the classroom, keep up with programme, and manage their behaviour at the same time (Murphy 2012: 7; Turketi 2010: 2). Therefore, teachers often find themselves in a situation where the choice of their teaching methods and material predetermines the success or failure of a lesson (or a whole series of lessons) when there are students with ADHD present in the classroom (Turketi 2010: 49). At the same time, teachers often lack the knowledge and skills necessary to teach and support students with ADHD (Ohan et al 2008: 437). There are, nevertheless, general guidelines for teaching children with ADHD, which will be discussed in the present paper. Although students with ADHD exhibit a whole range of symptoms which make them unique and special attention and approaches are needed depending on the case (Geng 2011: 27). The idea of the research arose due to necessity and lack of similar research in the field of English language teaching in Estonia. However, research has been conducted on a different special educational need in Estonia – teaching English to blind and visually impaired students (Lõvi 2013). Since the teaching of ADHD students has its own specific strategies, teachers should familiarise themselves with research on other special needs as well to be able to addresses the individual differences and requirements of students with different educational needs.

The purpose of the thesis is to determine how Estonian teachers teach English to students with ADHD. In order to reach the goal, an understanding of human behaviour is needed. Therefore, the thesis is a piece of qualitative research with interview as the data collection method and thematic analysis as the approach to data analysis. The empirical study is based on semi-structured interviews with three teachers who have experience working with the students diagnosed with ADHD. The results will contribute to a better understanding of which teaching strategies and teaching methods are successful and which ones are ineffective or counterproductive with ADHD students.

The thesis is organised into three chapters. The first chapter provides a theoretical overview of ADHD and illustrates the difference of boys and girls having ADHD. The first chapter reviews why girls are diagnosed with ADHD much less often than boys or missed completely.

The second chapter focuses on teaching English to students with ADHD, discussing the students' struggles and the most common methods to overcome those problems. Chapter II also illustrates why teachers of English need a wider approach to teaching as opposed to only focusing on the English language instruction.

The third chapter presents the method, results and a discussion of the results of an empirical study conducted in the form of semi-structured interviews with three teachers of English who teach English to students with ADHD diagnosis in Estonia. The experiences of the teachers provide valuable information to other teachers of English who would like to get a holistic understanding of how English is taught to students with ADHD.

## 1. ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (2015a: para. 4) and the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH) (n.d.b: para. 2) distinguish between three subtypes of ADHD:

1. predominantly inattentive presentation (difficult to notice details, finish a task or follow conversation, being forgetful, etc.),
2. predominantly hyperactive-impulsive presentation (fidgeting, restlessness, impulsivity, etc.),
- 3.a combined presentation (both inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive).

The CDC (2015a: para 1) also informs that ADHD is normally diagnosed in childhood and it can often still be present in adulthood. Excessive talking, fidgeting, risk-taking, daydreaming, forgetfulness and absent-mindedness, carelessness and ineffective communication are only some of the signs commonly associated with ADHD.

According to the CDC (2015b: para. 2), the Fifth edition of the American Psychiatric Association's *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual* (DSM-5) is used to aid in diagnosing ADHD. DSM-IV was replaced by DSM-5 in May 2013. Some of the changes in the fifth edition according to the CDC are as follows:

Symptoms can now occur by age 12 rather than by age 6; several symptoms now need to be present in more than one setting rather than just some impairment in more than one setting; new descriptions were added to show what symptoms might look like at older ages; and for adults and adolescents age 17 or older, only 5 symptoms are needed instead of the 6 needed for younger children. (2015b: para. 3)

The changes in the manual may indicate that ADHD does not only belong to the childhood but can continue to cause problems later during adolescence or even adulthood. The severity of symptoms seems to diminish with age, so adolescents and adults need to meet only five symptoms for the criteria of *inattention* (1) and, also, *hyperactivity-impulsivity*



(2). ADHD exhibits specific symptoms and needs to be diagnosed by a medical professional.

The CDC (2015b: para. 4) notes that for up to 16-year-olds, six or more symptoms need to be present for the criteria of *inattention* (1) and, also, *hyperactivity-impulsivity* (2). The symptoms (CDC 2015b: para. 4) are listed in Table 1.

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| <p>1. Inattention:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Often fails to give close attention to details or makes careless mistakes in schoolwork, at work, or with other activities.</li> <li>(b) Often has trouble holding attention on tasks or play activities.</li> <li>(c) Often does not seem to listen when spoken to directly.</li> <li>(d) Often does not follow through on instructions and fails to finish schoolwork, chores, or duties in the workplace (e.g., loses focus, side-tracked).</li> <li>(e) Often has trouble organizing tasks and activities.</li> <li>(f) Often avoids, dislikes, or is reluctant to do tasks that require mental effort over a long period of time (such as schoolwork or homework).</li> <li>(g) Often loses things necessary for tasks and activities (e.g. school materials, pencils, books, tools, wallets, keys, paperwork, eyeglasses, mobile telephones).</li> <li>(h) Is often easily distracted.</li> <li>(i) Is often forgetful in daily activities.</li> </ul> <p>2. Hyperactivity/impulsivity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>(a) Often fidgets with or taps hands or feet, or squirms in seat.</li> <li>(b) Often leaves seat in situations when remaining seated is expected.</li> <li>(c) Often runs about or climbs in situations where it is not appropriate (adolescents or adults may be limited to feeling restless).</li> <li>(d) Often unable to play or take part in leisure activities quietly.</li> <li>(e) Is often "on the go" acting as if "driven by a motor".</li> <li>(f) Often talks excessively.</li> <li>(g) Often blurts out an answer before a question has been completed.</li> <li>(h) Often has trouble waiting his/her turn.</li> <li>(i) Often interrupts or intrudes on others (e.g., butts into conversations or games).</li> </ul> |
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Table 1. Symptoms of ADHD.

There are different approaches to the process of diagnosing ADHD in different countries. Should schools be involved in this process? George J. DuPaul and Gary Stoner (2003: 65) suggest that “it is clear that school psychologists and other educational professionals have the training and expertise to be involved in this process”. From a trained and experienced teacher’s viewpoint it seems stagnant that a school’s role in the

assessment of ADHD is so limited. Students spend almost half of their time in school or after-school programmes and it is the teacher's task to know their students. Teachers could provide medical professionals with valuable information about the students' state and progress. Cooperation between medical professionals, students with ADHD, parents, school's support staff, etc., could prove to be more successful than, for example, in the case when a teacher does not even know that the student has been diagnosed with ADHD or whether a student is on medication. Any person responsible for a child needs to know this kind of information so potential risks could be considered.

A teacher who is responsible for a student should know everything that could potentially harm their student or other students. For example, Jane Collingwood (2013: para. 11) notes that the intake of too much coffee and sugar for a period of time can aggravate ADHD symptoms. William Feldman (2002: 144), on the contrary, comments that numerous studies have been carried out and the results suggested that there was no difference between the children who were getting more sugar and those getting less. Since ADHD can exhibit different traits in people, different triggers, such as sugar, for example, can worsen their situation. Consequently, if there is a possibility of caffeine and sugar causing a student to be overly hyperactive or even aggressive and because of that they may put themselves and others at risk, teachers should be aware of the threat. Therefore, those responsible for the child need to know the child's triggers so extra care could be taken. Parents cannot monitor their child at all times unless they cooperate with the teachers and staff. Jaymie Gerard (2010: 14) illustrates the importance of cooperation between teachers, staff, parents and other professionals:

It is a teacher's job to observe her/his students, to note (both formally and informally) what she/he sees, to communicate what is seen to parents and other professionals in the school, to make referrals to other professionals, to accommodate the needs of students, and to create a classroom environment that fosters care, learning and positive growth in *all* students.

The causes of ADHD are yet to be determined but several factors could contribute to the occurrence of ADHD. The NIMH (n.d.b: para. 3) states that the causes of ADHD are unknown to scientists but certain factors, such as, environmental effects, brain injuries, nutrition (sugar and food additives), and the social environment, are being studied in order to find possible links to ADHD. Feldman (2002: 101) finds no links between food additives, sugar, allergies and ADHD. Alison Munden and Jon Arcelus (2000: 64) concur that diet and ADHD are not related, however, they argue that atopic children may be more sensitive to different food additives. Twin studies suggest that ADHD is an inherited disorder and, therefore, connected to genetics (NIMH n.d.b: para. 4; Munden et al 2000: 58). If a parent or family member has ADHD then it is very likely that other members of the family may have it as well (Mahr 2007: para. 5). Parents and teachers should notice if food or other triggers aggravate the symptoms of ADHD and they should make sure students avoid them (Munden et al 2000: 65; Feldman 2002: 101).

Patricia Mahar and Lynne Chalmers (2007: 1) vividly explain what it is like to have ADHD:

Imagine living in a fast-moving kaleidoscope, where sounds, images, and thoughts are constantly shifting, feeling easily bored, yet helpless to keep your mind on tasks you need to complete. Distracted by unimportant sights and sounds, your mind drives you from one thought or activity to the next. Perhaps you are so wrapped up in a collage of thoughts and images that you don't notice when someone speaks to you.

It is too easy to say that they “just don't want to behave” or they “choose not to listen” or “it's their upbringing” or “they'll grow out of it”. These are all misconceptions that need to be corrected time and again. Krista Mahr (2007: para. 5) illustrates that the majority of people outgrow ADHD but approximately “a quarter to a third of children and teenagers carry their ADHD into adulthood”. Moreover, Thomas E. Brown estimates that the percentage of children who continue to have ADHD-related problems may be even higher, about 70 or 80 (2015: para. 22). Students may grow out of the hyperactivity as they mature

but inattention is more persistent (Brown 2015: para 22). Thus, ADHD can continue to cause problems later in life as well.

It is also a misconception that ADHD usually corresponds with a low IQ. Naheed Vaida, Nadhia H. Mattoo and Abdul Gani Madhosh (2013) studied the intelligence among ADHD children between the ages of five to nine. They found significant relation between the inattentive type and IQ. Significant relation was not found between hyperactive type and combined type. It is necessary to know how to help students with ADHD in order to provide them with proper assignments, learning strategies, learning environment, and additional support (e.g. behavioural) to ensure better performance. ADHD is more likely a disadvantage, therefore teachers must know how to prevent it from hindering their students' progress. They must also know how to notice when ADHD, on the contrary, helps the students excel in something in order to provide encouragement and extra help to ensure the students' success.

It should be noted that although ADHD can be a handicap in life due to its characteristics of inattentiveness, forgetfulness, fidgeting, etc., that can cause problems while studying or communicating with peers and teachers, it can also sometimes be an advantage. For example, BBC News (2010) reports that ADHD could actually prove to be an advantage because of the "capacity to hyper-focus on a narrow area that is of particular interest to them". The article names several historical figures who exhibited ADHD signs and who have supposedly benefitted from possibly having ADHD, for example, Sir Walter Raleigh, Thomas Edison, Oscar Wilde, James Dean, Clark Gable, Che Guevara, Mozart, George Orwell, Andy Warhol and Kurt Cobain. Munden and Arcelus (2000: 55) list emergency doctors, soldiers, pilots, police officers and entrepreneurs as possible careers where ADHD could prove to be an advantage.

The ability to hyper-focus or to do several things simultaneously could prove to be a valuable skill in many fields in the future. For example, the information technology sector in Estonia needs thousands of new specialists, and millions of new specialists are needed in the world (Velsker and Himma 2014), so ADHD together with (very) good English skills could prove to be an advantage to a lot of students.

Another problematic issue is the use of medication to manage the symptoms of ADHD. Munden and Arcelus (2000: 61-62) report a study carried out in the USA in 1973 which compared the electroencephalograms of ADHD children with non-ADHD children. Non-ADHD children exhibit a more mature pattern of brain electrical activity. Medication reduced the differences between ADHD children and non-ADHD children. They also report a study carried out by the American Institute of Mental Health using positron emission tomography scanning to suggest that adults with ADHD have a reduced metabolic activity in the frontal regions of the brain because of reduced blood flow, especially in girls. Stimulants temporarily reversed that effect.

On the one hand, medication may prove helpful in managing some of the effects of ADHD. Since the severity of ADHD is different for everyone, not everyone needs medication but it could help with severe cases. Methylphenidate and Dexamphetamine are often prescribed as stimulants to children with ADHD. According to Munden and Arcelus (2000: 86; 93), Methylphenidate and Dexamphetamine both manage hyperactivity and impulsiveness and increase the attention span of ADHD children. By managing the symptoms of ADHD, the student may find it easier not to become into conflict with school rules, teachers' instructions and their results should, consequently, become better. Being able to control one's emotions and actions makes it easier to socialise with peers, teachers, parents, etc., and should generally create a happier atmosphere.

On the other hand, medication may have side effects that everyone involved should be aware of in order to ensure the safety of the child. Martin L. Kutscher (2007: 196), DuPaul and Stoner (2003: 204, 206), Feldman (2002: 119-122), Munden and Arcelus (2000: 91) list possible side effects from being under medication: appetite loss, insomnia, head and stomach aches, tics, and there may be further complications due to depression (Kutscher 2000: 197) and anxiety (Kutscher 2000: 199). Feldman (2002: 118-119) suggests that personality changes may occur while on medication and the change occurs rapidly but eventually the child becomes accustomed to the medication and ADHD symptoms decrease. Gerard (2010: 13) interviewed a female friend who was treated with medication and was surprised that “she used them, abused them, and was put on an increasing amount and different kinds of medication, and, according to my friend, they only made her problem worse”.

If students with ADHD are on medication, it may be advisable to reduce caffeine-based products to a minimum. Since caffeine is also a stimulant, it may cause anxiety, sleep onset insomnia, and is even reported to cause nausea. Any one of us would most likely fail to concentrate on a task when feeling unwell and for a student with ADHD, it may be even more difficult. Knowing whether a child is on medication or not could help the teacher foresee possible patterns of behaviour and problems with concentration and attention, and the teacher could, therefore, choose the most appropriate teaching method to try to ensure academic success and student’s well-being. Medication is not the solution to everyone with ADHD since it can cause unwanted side effects.

Some studies have been carried out to find links between ADHD, the use of medication, and possible drug use later in life. Kirsikka Kurg (2013: 14-15) finds that once ADHD children get acquainted with drugs, they most likely try more than once and may become addicted, especially those who are very restless because they may need something

to help them calm them down or vice versa. Kutscher (2007: 196), on the contrary, reports that according to several studies, stimulant use does not increase the risk of substance abuse. Feldman (2002: 124) similarly believes that medication helps ADHD children control their actions and, therefore, helps them resist illegal substances instead. Feldman (2002: 125), Munden and Arcelus (2000: 90) still warn that stimulant abuse is not unheard of, therefore, medication must be taken precisely and none should be misplaced, lost or stolen (medication that is used to treat ADHD may be sold illegally as a recreational drug). Although the number of those believing that the use of ADHD medication can be linked to later substance abuse is declining, it is still advised that those involved stay aware of the possible risks.

It is general belief that boys misbehave more than girls, therefore, the behaviour of boys is more closely observed by teachers than the behaviour of girls. Due to this prejudice teachers might not notice when a girl may have a problem, which in turn could be linked to ADHD. Hyperactivity-impulsivity symptoms are naturally noticed more easily than those of inattention.

Delia Randmäe (2014) studied how the symptoms of ADHD relate to the satisfaction of school life, and depression and anxiety. She was concerned with whether inattention-concentration or hyperactivity-impulsivity impacts school satisfaction more, and whether there are any differences between genders. According to the findings, both inattention-concentration and hyperactivity-impulsivity disorders influenced satisfaction and student-teacher relationships and no effect was noticed on peer relationships (Randmäe 2014: 2). She found that girls exhibit less symptoms of inattention-concentration than boys but suffer more from depression and anxiety (Randmäe 2014: 2). Since ADHD seems to appear differently in girls and boys and it may lead to teachers' differing attitudes, the symptoms of ADHD in girls and boys should be viewed separately.

## 1.1 Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in boys

The NIH (n.d.b: para. 17) states that ADHD “affects 9.0% of American children“ (aged 13-18), boys are “four times at risk than girls”, and that those who are predominantly hyperactive-impulsive or both hyperactive-impulsive and inattentive (combined presentation of ADHD) “tend to have social problems”. Social problems may arise due to several evident reasons: for example, the child is unable to wait for his or her turn, reacts emotionally and often even dramatically, blurts out answers without really registering what is going on, interrupts, constantly fidgets, forgets things, cannot sit still, and often jumps up to move around.

The aforementioned reasons ensure that boys who suffer from ADHD are noticed quicker than girls with the same problem. Kathleen G. Nadeau (2004b: para.1) illustrates the possible difference between ADHD in girls and boys:

Boys with ADD (ADHD), are easy to spot in the classroom, and are much more likely to be referred for an evaluation. Most questionnaires used to screen children for ADD (ADHD) emphasize items that describe these boys, items about hyperactivity, impulsivity and defiant behavior. Only those few girls who are like these boys with ADD (ADHD) are sent for assessment. The ratio of children referred to clinics for ADD (ADHD) evaluations continues to be about four or five boys for each girl.

The reasons behind the differences may be that boys with ADHD tend to be more impulsive and get into trouble more often than girls (with and without ADHD). It is no surprise that due to easily catching the teachers’ attention, problems tend to be identified and solved at a greater speed than with ADHD girls who may seem to be more consumed with their own thoughts and causing less trouble instead (Nadeau 2004b: para. 2).

A typical boy with ADHD is easy to recognise because, generally, he is impulsive and hyperactive. There are less boys belonging to either the inattentive type or hyperactive-impulsive type and more to the combined type (Rasmussen et al 2002: 797). First of all, boys belonging to the inattentive type can be characterised as follows (NHS 2014: para. 7):

- has difficulty paying attention and listening to instructions



- is easily distracted
- is forgetful and careless
- has problems with concentration
- is unable to finish longer tasks
- jumps from one task to another

A teacher may not realise that a boy belonging to the inattentive type may have ADHD because his behaviour is less conspicuous than that of a hyperactive-impulsive type. Secondly, the following characteristics describe boys belonging to the hyperactive-impulsive type (NHS 2014: para. 8):

- fidgety, unable to sit still, moves excessively
- talk constantly, interrupt other people, cannot wait for their turn
- acts impulsively with little or no regard for consequences (danger)
- cannot focus on assignments

Boys belonging to the hyperactive-impulsive type are identified quickly because their behaviour tends to be insistent and conspicuous. More boys belong to the third, combined type and can be characterised by the symptoms of inattention and hyperactivity-impulsivity. The National Health Service (2014: para. 9) outlines the consequent problems: “underachievement at school, poor social interaction with other children and adults, and problems with discipline”. It is evident that despite the type of ADHD, the symptoms can cause poor progress in class, inept social skills and problems with forming friendships. Teachers should react to the characteristic signs immediately and also be able to notice more subtle hints that a boy may be struggling because of ADHD.

Stephen Hinshaw said on an NPR radio show *Talk of the Nation* that one type of boys with ADHD (hyperactive-impulsive or combined type) are the stereotype of Dennis the Menace (NPR 2008: para. 26). The reference to the popular comic strip character from

the 1950s illustrates a typical boy with ADHD very well- someone whose wonderment leads to trouble. He also points out that “because we just all know that girls really don't have ADHD- [they] could get missed” (NPR 2008: para.17). This phenomenon is explained by Stacey M. Dray, Marilyn A. Campbell and Linda A. Gilmore:

Since girls with ADHD are predominately found in the inattentive subtype it is reasonable to conclude that delay in diagnosis of girls with ADHD may be attributed to the later onset of the disorder due to different developmental stages in ADHD. However, gender specific hyperactivity behaviours, less overt internalizing behaviours, gender bias in teacher ratings and male orientated criteria statements are all possible explanations contributing to the discrepancy in the gender ratio of ADHD and perhaps an explanation to why many girls with ADHD seem to be “invisible”. (2006: 8)

ADHD can exhibit different traits in boys and girls and the diagnosis of the latter is often overlooked or discovered later than usual (Dray et al 2006: 3). It seems that ADHD in girls is often overlooked or diagnosed later than in boys because their symptoms tend to be less obvious than in boys.

## **1.2 Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder in girls**

Teachers seem to be more used to noticing the misbehaviour of boys than girls, and, therefore, girls' problems and ADHD signs may be overlooked. Glenn S. Hirsch (2009: para. 2) suggests that “as many as 50 to 75 percent of girls with ADHD are missed” and adds that “girls are diagnosed five years later than boys (boys are generally diagnosed at age 7 and girls at age 12)”. Munden and Arcelus (2000: 49) also report that girls are outnumbered by boys, and since boys are more prone to violence, their problems are identified quicker.

Several studies have contributed to the growing awareness of the needs of girls with ADHD (Quinn et al 2004; Dray et al 2006; Elkins et al 2011; Babinski et al 2011; Biederman et al 2012). It is suggested that only one in ten children with ADHD is

identified and the families of those overlooked are “presumably experiencing unnecessary difficulties and problems that are potentially treatable” (Munden et al 2000: 50).

While boys are mostly hyperactive and impulsive, girls are, on the contrary, mostly inattentive according to Nadeau (2004b: para. 2). They may seem disconnected, appear to be looking out of the window a lot, pick at their nails or skin, etc. The following behaviours may indicate ADHD in girls: daydreaming, feeling anxious and depressed, talking excessively, trying very hard to be noticed (even by acting silly), being shy and inattentive, seeking the attention of boys more than their peers, difficulty maintaining friends, and being messy (Nadeau 2004b: para. 4-5).

Furthermore, girls with ADHD may have very low self-esteem that they try to overcome with attention from boys which may lead to sexual risks (unprotected sex, pregnancy, etc.). There is an additional problem concerning ADHD girls: premenstrual syndrome (PMS), which increases the girls’ sensitivity due to hormonal changes in their bodies (Nadeau 2004a: para. 20). Evidently parents and teachers should know what kind of issues girls with ADHD are dealing with in order to help them make more educated decisions about their lives and help them keep away from serious problems.

Girls may try to hide their feelings of inadequacy and, therefore, hide their inability to cope with tasks and expectations. A teacher may not notice for a while that a girl may have more serious issues in class than simply running out of time to complete the task. Teachers should notice, when a female student often fails to finish assignments although they seem to be knowing the material (Adams n. d.: para 19). Perhaps they assume that girls are more disposed to asking for help than boys. The tendency of girls being rather inattentive as opposed to the hyperactive-impulsive or combined inattentive and hyperactive-impulsive type means that some girls’ ADHD may go unnoticed until they either grow out of it or become adults. This problem was also discussed on the NPR radio

show *Talk of the Nation*. According to NPR (2008), female caller Jen suffered from panic attacks, sleep disorders, “high, high, high amounts of stress” (2008: para. 8), daydreaming, the inability to follow conversations, and depression all her life but her ADHD was not diagnosed until she was 31 years old. It must have been difficult not knowing what was happening or how to control these symptoms and how to study while being depressed and anxious.

ADHD makes girls vulnerable to a range of issues and risks which may hinder the ability to learn and socialise with peers. A teacher can support girls with ADHD by understanding where their problems stem from and by maintaining constant contact with parents. A joint effort by teachers and parents may help girls with ADHD feel safe enough to deal with their emotions and other problems in a more constructive way, thus creating a safe atmosphere for reflection and learning.

## **2. TEACHING STUDENTS WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER**

A teacher is not in school only to teach a specific subject but to make sure each of their students becomes a functioning member of society in every sense, so they guide, educate, and direct despite the subject. Sometimes, students with ADHD may hinder the learning process of the whole classroom when the teacher is unable to help the student manage and control impulsive behaviour. As Natalia Turketi explains, a sequence of problems may arise:

Although sometimes unintentional, the lack of teachers' awareness or access to the know-how resources can result in their being unable to manage their ADHD students properly. This, in turn, leads to poor academic progress, as well as a variety of relationship issues and general stressful atmosphere in class. (2010: 1)

The teacher is expected to evaluate the situation and the student's needs when teaching. Teachers must be aware of the obstacles students with ADHD may have while learning English. They need to know which methods and approaches to use, and which activities work and guarantee results. Turketi observes that activities need changes to suit children with learning problems and that those "adaptations do not pose an insurmountable task if the teacher stays aware of the difficulties that students may experience in their learning paths and is eager to address them" (2010: 37). The teacher must want to address the issues which may occur when teaching a student with ADHD.

Sufficient preparation of the teachers should ensure satisfactory results to students with ADHD. ESL and EFL teachers "must have a fairly sophisticated understanding of language-based learning disabilities and AD/HD, and the problems they tend to pose, in order to create environments in which all students can learn" (Leons et al 2009: 44). ADHD students are being impulsive, distracted and, according to Turketi (2010: 3), "either being disruptive and aggressive or silent and taciturn". A teacher must know the problems an ADHD student may experience when learning, how to solve these problems, how to

support the student's classroom behaviour, and how to create an atmosphere where learning is the main focus.

Gretchen Geng (2011: 27) investigates teachers' verbal and nonverbal strategies for managing the behaviour of ADHD students and finds that the way teachers speak "can influence whether a situation escalates or calms" and stresses that every ADHD student is unique who needs specially chosen strategies. Eve Leons, Christie Herbert and Ken Gobbo (2009: 42) inquire why ADHD students find the foreign language curriculum problematic and how their struggle manifests itself in the lessons. ADHD students may not be able to control their behaviour when they experience difficulties with learning. The key to successful teaching and learning is an effective management of disruptive behaviour in a classroom. In order to effectively master the management of disruptive behaviour, it is essential to determine the reason for disruptive behaviour and also be aware of successful management strategies.

Numerous studies have been carried out to determine the types of disruptive behaviour and teachers' abilities to successfully employ strategies to manage behaviour. For example, Christie Arbuckle and Emma Little (2004) examine variables, such as gender, teacher confidence and experience, specific disruptive student behaviours, and behaviour management strategies. They suggest that teachers are more concerned with boys' disruptive behaviour since it occurs more often and the effective classroom management depends on teachers' experience, confidence, and awareness of effective strategies.

There is an abundance of materials and teaching strategies for students with ADHD available online. The chosen teaching methods and strategies may work with some students but not with others. Turketi (2010) explores how to teach English to ADHD students by mapping the obstacles in second language acquisition, covering the methods

and approaches in teaching English to ADHD students and offering activities implementing the methodology covered. A teacher cannot successfully teach students with ADHD if they have misconceptions about the disorder.

In Estonia, studies have been conducted investigating teachers' knowledge and misconceptions concerning ADHD (Õim 2004; Leppsaar 2013). Airiin Õim (2004: 2) conducted a comparative study between Estonian and Norwegian teachers and found that Estonian teachers' knowledge of ADHD was poor. Õim (2004: 11) proposes several reasons to explain the reason behind insufficient knowledge about ADHD, such as "quality of teacher education, special training, interests, child's gender" and previous experience with ADHD students. Annika Leppsaar (2013: 25) also suggests that previous experience results in better knowledge about ADHD but reaches the opposite conclusion, although conceding that several studies nevertheless affirm the connection between past experience and better ADHD-related knowledge. Studies seem to suggest that teachers' general awareness of ADHD could be better. A teacher needs to know more about ADHD, how it could be managed, how to ensure that the student with ADHD makes progress, etc.

Once there is an understanding of what ADHD is and what it does, we must know *how* to teach a student with ADHD. Of course, expertise comes with experience. Mahar and Chalmers (2007: 8) emphasise the necessity of professional development and awareness of what it is like for a student to have ADHD. They clearly explain:

Several aspects of teaching students with ADHD surfaced as areas that need more indepth understanding by teachers: the characteristics of students diagnosed with ADHD, the need for and management of medication, how to teach students with ADHD organizational strategies, how to teach students with ADHD coping strategies for dealing with anxiety regarding school expectations, how to make educational and behavioral accommodations for students with ADHD, and how to use a multi-team approach when teaching students with ADHD. (2007:8)

In order to achieve progress, a teacher should know the specific ADHD traits of the individual, whether the person is on medication (is the medication effective or does it seem to cause side effects?), and what kind of strategies work with the particular student. The

teacher should also be prepared to monitor the emotional side of the student, making sure the student does not develop anxiety or stress because of expectations related to school, home, and society. It is also beneficial for the teacher to cooperate with other members of the staff when instructing a student with ADHD to provide help and support.

Gerard (2010: 12) asked a friend with a diagnosis to comment on how teachers or schools should help children and the answer is as follows: “Smaller classrooms. More one-on-one time. I had to fight for my teacher’s attention. I’d be like, “Look at me! I did good!” There were times I did bad just to get the teacher’s attention. I needed positive reaction, that’s what still lights my fire”. The personal experience of the woman seems to suggest that larger classrooms may be the source of more chaos for the students with ADHD since a larger classroom entails more sources of distractions. Also, since ADHD students need more interaction with the teacher, they may feel that they have to fight for attention and that may lead to problems with behaviour and also peer interaction. Therefore, every teacher needs to evaluate their teaching strategy when students with ADHD are present in the classroom.

The U.S. Department of Education (2008: para. 1) suggests three components to a successful teaching strategy for students with ADHD:

1. academic instruction,
2. behavioral interventions,
3. classroom accommodations.

First of all, academic instruction involves the conducting of a lesson from beginning to end. This implies that the teacher tells the students what has been planned, what the students have to do and how they have to behave, what materials will be used, keeping in mind that instructions should be clear and comprehensible. Secondly, behavioural intervention requires the teacher to direct the student towards favoured and rewarded



behaviour instead of only reprimanding the student for misbehaving. Disruptive behaviour usually disturbs the other students in the class and needs to be managed effectively. Behavioural intervention also allows the student to analyse his or her behaviour, plan of action, and the steps taken to achieve a goal. Knowing the necessary sequence of steps necessary to complete a task is an essential learning skill. Seeing which steps are effective and which are ineffective allows not only the teacher but also the student to understand what works and what does not work and, eventually, how to manage time more effectively. Thirdly, classroom accommodation is useful to consider when creating an atmosphere that allows students with ADHD learn more effectively, and it may involve rearranging the seating or lighting, having space for moving, using window covers, etc.

Once the classroom meets the needs of students with ADHD, we can commence teaching. In order to do that, it is useful to know the students' learning styles. Turketi (2010: 17) suggests that ADHD students are mostly visual and kinaesthetic learners. The characteristics of these learning types are listed in Table 2 (Greathead n.d.).

#### **Visual learners**

- Learn best by looking, watching and observing (posters, visual overheads, colours, videos, mind maps)
- Want to see how things are done
- Doodle and draw

#### **Kinaesthetic learners**

- Use their hands, whole bodies, and feelings to learn
- Create and make things, pull things apart and rebuild them

Table 2. The main characteristics of visual and kinaesthetic learners.

The characteristics of visual and kinaesthetic learners implies that if a teacher manages to meet the students' needs, the lessons should succeed. It is suggested that

ADHD students need structure (Department of Education 2008: para. 4, Leons et al 2009: 51), encouragement, and plenty of positive reinforcement (Gerard 2010: 16). If a teacher allows ADHD students to move around during activities and repeats the same patterns, the students should respond well (Turketi 2010). Munden and Arcelus (2000: 20) explain that although there are many similarities in the experiences of different people and their families living with ADHD, “every child and their family contains unique individuals with their own specific circumstances, advantages and disadvantages”. Naturally, teachers should know their students best and choose the appropriate approaches to teach (English) to their ADHD students, considering their students’ idiomatic traits caused by ADHD (Geng 2011: 27).

## **2.1 The struggles of students with ADHD in the classroom**

ADHD students may have problems with the following: reading comprehension, phonetics, writing, spelling, handwriting, mathematic; asendada mathematics and they lack study skills and time management skills (U.S. Department of Education 2008). All the other struggles students with ADHD experience stem from the aforementioned problems. These problems are very general and each teacher should learn the idiomatic traits and problems of the particular student.

Turketi (2010: 17-18) explains that ADHD students have poor auditory and reading comprehension skills, they are often unable to reach an aim, and they have poor social skills because of their inability to perform according to accepted social norms. They may focus on some unimportant detail and, consequently, may fail to notice the main point of a topic or teacher’s instruction (Turketi 2010: 6). This can lead to a whole series of problems: misunderstandings, anxiety or stress because of unfinished tasks and teachers’

demands, anger or aggressiveness or self-absorption, the inability to wait for one's turn, misunderstandings with teachers, staff, and peers.

ADHD may hinder the English language acquisition because general ADHD-related problems are elementary skills necessary for any language acquisition. For example, when ADHD symptoms influence the student's handwriting, the latter influences spelling and writing skills. Reading comprehension problems naturally influences everything since misunderstanding the task results in poor outcome, leads to lower marks, and may cause unnecessary stress. Auditory problems cause misunderstanding and pronunciation problems. If a student has problems with mathematics, it influences specific skills in every subject, including English. Poor time management skills are not a problem only at school but may also cause problems at home and elsewhere.

How can we help struggling students? Shelley Murphy (2012: 35) explains how this problem is addressed in Canada: "Schools can develop an Individual Education Plan (IEP) for their students, through which special education programs and services can be delivered. The IEP usually specifies accommodations and curriculum modifications for a particular student." Similarly, in Estonia, an individual curriculum (*individuaalne õppekava*) can be employed. The individual curriculum can accommodate for the students' needs in a comprehensive school if necessary. If there is a student with ADHD in the classroom, there should be a coordinator who could act as a link between teachers who makes sure that everyone are managing with their teaching strategies or provides help when necessary.

Once the students' basic needs have been met, we can proceed with teaching English to students with ADHD.

### **2.1.1 Teaching English to students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder**

Do we need specific methods to teach English to ADHD students? Turketi (2010: 22) questions the necessity of separate methods for teaching English to students with ADHD:

It is my current opinion that for teaching English to ADHD children no separate method or approach need to be developed per se, since the ESL (EFL) methodology already has a rich variety of feasible tools which can be successfully applied in teaching English to students with these learning differences. The problem of successful implementation lies in making a choice of those pedagogical and methodological means that can be most efficient in addressing ADHD needs and learning preferences.

Teachers have to be ready for trial and error or they can try using methods that mostly work with ADHD students. Knowing the student certainly aids in decision making. Some methods are universal. For example, if in mathematics, an ADHD student is taught to recognise patterns, the same thing should work when teaching English, or if writing skills need to be practised, a “post office” game (U.S. Department of Education 2008) might encourage students to write to each other and the teacher, and consequently improve their writing skills. Since repetitive activities and patterns suit a student with ADHD, methods which can be used not only in English lessons, but also, for example, in mathematics, geography, history, etc., help students develop necessary learning skills to meet the schools’ and parents’ demands. These demands ensure that the student will become a functioning member of society.

Who are functioning members of society? In Estonia the National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2014: § 3) it is stated that schools “contribute to growing youth into a creative, diverse personality who are able to self-actualize in full-fledged manner in different roles: in the family, at work and in public life” and “the main purpose of learning and education is to ensure the pupils’ age-appropriate, moral, physical and social development and shaping of a comprehensive worldview”. The general competences laid

out in the national curriculum are the foundation for further growing and development. The National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools (2014: § 4) states:

General upper secondary education is a continuation of basic education in socializing the new generation, which is based on Estonian cultural traditions, common European values and achievements of world culture and science. Intellectually, socially, emotionally, morally and physically mature people who have acquired a general upper secondary education are the guarantee of the sustainability of the social, cultural, economic and ecological development of Estonian society.

An English teacher cannot only focus on teaching English because the most important task of any teacher is to support the individual development of each pupil, which is the intended purpose of the law.

The general demands of necessary competences are outlined in the Estonian National Curriculum. The National Curriculum for Basic Schools (2014: §4) outlines seven general competences that all teachers, homes and schools should develop in students:

1. value competence
2. social competence
3. self-management competence
4. learning to learn competence
5. communication competence
6. mathematics competence
7. entrepreneurship competence

The detailed descriptions of general competences are presented in Appendix 1.

These competences are the foundation upon which further skills could be laid. The National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools requires the inclusion of eight cross-curricular topics in teaching that are used as a means to integrate general competences and subject field competences. These topics are presented in the following list:

1. Lifelong learning and career planning
2. Environment and sustainable development

3. Civic initiative and enterprise
4. Cultural identity
5. Information environment
6. Technology and innovation
7. Health and safety
8. Values and morality (National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools 2014: §10)

The descriptions of cross-curricular topics are presented in Appendix 2.

As evidenced by the general and subject field competences laid out in the Estonian National Curriculum, English teachers cannot teach from a very subject-centered viewpoint only since there is more pressure to also teach general and different subject field competences to develop a holistic understanding of society in students. Being able to manage in life is without a doubt more important than abundances of factual information or excellent marks. This is why teachers have to consider these more general aims laid out in the national curriculum.

Krista Mahlakõiv (2013) has studied EFL teachers' attitudes towards including cross-curricular topics into lessons in Estonia and gives an overview of methods used to teach such topics. She concludes that EFL teachers already have a positive attitude towards cross-cultural topics (Mahlakõiv 2013: 57). This does not come as a surprise since foreign language curriculum can be quite flexible and the material covered is normally chosen by the teacher. This trend implies cooperation between teachers of different subjects who should work together towards the common goal of teaching students the skills necessary to become functional members of society. Cooperation helps teachers decide which methods work best with particular students and which methods are ineffective. Exercising the same structure and pattern may help obtain these teaching aims with ADHD students who need

special attention since their symptoms predispose them to social problems and peer interaction difficulties which, in turn, may result in them growing up at a disadvantage.

Besides general competences, thematic areas for teaching foreign languages have been included in the national curriculum and these thematic areas (National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2011: Annex 2; National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools: Annex 2) are presented in Table 3.

| The thematic areas for teaching foreign languages in the National Curriculum for Basic Schools   | The thematic areas for teaching foreign languages in the National Curriculum for Upper Secondary Schools  |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Me and others</li> <li>• Home and surroundings</li> <li>• Estonia my home</li> <li>• Countries and their culture</li> <li>• Daily Life. Learning and working</li> <li>• Spare time</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Estonia and the world</li> <li>• Culture and creativity</li> <li>• Environment and technology</li> <li>• Education and work</li> <li>• The individual and society</li> </ul> |

Table 3. The thematic areas for teaching foreign languages

Mahlakõiv (2013: 22) illustrates how general competences, cross-curricular topics and thematic areas can be combined: ““Estonia – my home” gives opportunities to discuss cross-curricular topics “Environment and sustainable development”, “Cultural identity” and “Values and morality”. A thematic area for Upper Secondary Schools, “The individual and society” can be connected with all cross-curricular topics”. General competences, cross-curricular topics, and thematic areas help the teacher develop the student’s character, outlook, and general skills that could be developed further later in life. Combining different aims into a lesson or series of lessons is not difficult at all for an experienced teacher. In the same way we need to approach a student with ADHD with a holistic approach and cannot focus on one side of the problem only. Specific skills related to the

English language are of secondary importance because we cannot teach children specific skills unless we can manage the ADHD problems which hinder their learning process.

For effective learning to take place, symptoms of ADHD need to be managed. There are several useful approaches to managing the symptoms and teaching English to students with ADHD. The most efficient approach depends on the student's interests and individual needs. The most common techniques used to teach English to ADHD students are different games that allow moving around and manage the students' inner ADHD-related restlessness.

Games help develop learning skills necessary to obtain learning goals. Turketi (2010: 18) suggests that since ADHD students enjoy playing games they can easily "release their hyperactivity, take a break from the learning routine and even stay focused on their learning goal much longer", and adds that games are beneficial because they improve "their interactive skills, fostering communication and cooperation". Games that require cooperation teach ADHD students necessary communication skills and, hopefully, enable them to form normal peer relationships with classmates during the learning process. All this is essential to a successful member of society. Also, games could be used as a reward to keep encouraging a student with ADHD to work towards a further goal. Games allow these students to alleviate their inner restlessness, which helps to focus better on a consequent task.

Since ADHD students are mostly good kinaesthetic learners, there cannot be any learning unless there is some kind of moving around involved. Turketi (2010: 18) specifies that students with ADHD "need to move almost all the time due to their hyperactive and restless nature". How to teach and move at the same time? This is for each teacher to figure out because the answer greatly depends on the students and their particular ADHD traits but different movement activities are easy to include in every lesson. What suits for one



student may not suit the other student. The purpose of any activity is to motivate and encourage the student and help them manage their ADHD symptoms so they could acquire English and other important competences to grow up as happy, confident, energetic, and competent individuals.

### **3. TEACHING ENGLISH TO STUDENTS WITH ATTENTION DEFICIT HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER IN ESTONIA: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY**

#### **3.1 Aim of the research and research questions**

The aim of the thesis is to determine what teaching strategies and teaching methods teachers of English in Estonia employ to teach students exhibiting ADHD. The empirical study explores the experience of three teachers of English to students with ADHD to learn the symptoms of ADHD in students and how these symptoms influence students' progress at school, the methods and resources of teaching English to ADHD students, as well as the methods of managing the behaviour of students with ADHD. The research questions stemming from the inquiry are as follows:

1. What are the symptoms of ADHD in boys and girls and what difficulties do they experience while learning English?
2. What teaching strategies and teaching methods are used to teach English to students with ADHD?
3. What methods are used to manage the behaviour of ADHD students?
4. What teaching resources are effective with ADHD students?

#### **3.2 Method**

The present study has been conducted by using a qualitative approach. A qualitative approach is employed when the understanding of human behaviour is needed. A qualitative approach allows the researcher to interpret the individual experiences of people related to a given research issue or collect "open-ended, emerging data, with the primary intent of

developing themes from the data” (Creswell 2003: 18). Although multiple methods could be used to obtain data, semi-structured interviews were chosen as a method for the current thesis to collect introspective and experiential data.

Semi-structured interviews were carried out with three teachers of English to students with ADHD to find out how to teach English to students with ADHD. The interview questions were composed by the author on the basis of literature and the research questions and subsequently, the inquiry focused on symptoms, methods, classroom management and suggestions.

To analyse the data collected with the recorded interviews, the method of thematic analysis, as explicated and exemplified by Virginia Braun and Victoria Clarke (2006), was employed. According to Braun and Clarke (2006: 7), thematic analysis serves to identify, analyse, and report patterns (themes) within data. In addition, they consider thematic analysis a flexible tool that suits the needs of a researcher with little experience. Braun and Clarke have further contributed to the applicability of their approach by providing a clear step-by-step guide with illustrations (Braun and Clarke 2006). In the six-phase process of employing the method of thematic analysis, where some phases mark continuous reification of the codes and themes, four major steps can be identified that were also observed in the data analysis of the current thesis:

1. transcription of recorded materials,
2. coding,
3. developing themes (patterns),
4. final analysis.

In the first step, the recorded interviews were transcribed. Transcriptions were as close to the recording as possible. In the second step, codes were generated to the data, which

allows to organise (and reorganise, if necessary) the data. Patterns or themes are established in the third step. A final analysis concludes the process as the fourth step.

### 3.2.1 Sample and research ethics

The study was carried out in April 2015 with three teachers of English to students with ADHD in an Estonian comprehensive school. Permission was asked from the head of the school to carry out semi-structured interviews and three teachers of English agreed to participate in the study. The teachers' background information was obtained by a short questionnaire at the end of the interview and the obtained data are presented in Table 4.

|              | Age    | Degree                | Working experience with ADHD students | Age of students with ADHD |
|--------------|--------|-----------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Respondent 1 | 39-43  | Master's degree       | 5 years and more                      | 7-10; 11-16; 17- ...      |
| Respondent 2 | 44-... | Specialist's Diploma* | 5 years and more                      | 7-10; 11-16               |
| Respondent 3 | 24-28  | Bachelor's degree     | 5 years and more                      | 11-16                     |

\*5-year programme in the Soviet period

Table 4. Respondents' background information.

All of the teachers teach other subjects besides English as well, so they likely able to notice integration of subject matter. That helps them to remain persistent with skills that demand attention in other lessons as well. Also, they can pay more attention to general competences of the national curriculum to ensure social growth in their ADHD students.

Although the age of the respondents varies from 24-28 to 44+, all of them have 5+ years of experience. Mahar and Chalmers (2007: 7-8) find that the experience of the

teacher influences the teacher's perceptions of ADHD (teachers who had taught ADHD students seven years or more were more confident in their abilities).

In spite of the respondents who participated in the interview having completed different levels of education, they seemed to have equal knowledge of ADHD, they complemented each other's responses, and each one had valuable information to offer that the others did not mention. Mahar and Chalmers (2007: 6) were also surprised to find out that the education of the teacher did not seem to influence teachers' responses to their survey, although teachers with more education should, naturally, be more knowledgeable about ADHD-related issues. It is possible that teachers with less experience would know less about ADHD but there is insufficient data to suggest it since all the respondents have at least 5 years of experience.

Initially, the plan was to interview about ten teachers but finding so many respondents was a difficult task. Despite the fact that there were only three respondents, already the second interview showed that the most important findings overlapped and the third interview confirmed this overlapping. The interviews were anonymous, the interviewees were informed of the aims of the study and the recordings with interviews will be deleted at the end of the study.

### **3.2.2 Interview questions and data analysis**

The interview questions (see Appendix 3) were deduced from the previous research and the research questions, and they were divided into four units:

- symptoms
- methods
- classroom management

- suggestions

The interview started with one introductory question to create a relaxed atmosphere, to allow the respondents to feel confident about their expertise, and to obtain relevant information about the respondents' background and experience. Each subsequent unit consisted of a set of 4-5 questions.

The questions in the "symptoms" unit allowed the respondent to speak about the characteristics of ADHD students, how these symptoms affect the students' performance, how these symptoms predispose ADHD students to experience problems (while learning English), and how ADHD is different in boys and in girls. The questions in the "methods" unit prompted the teacher to explain what teaching strategies they use with ADHD students, how they choose their teaching methods, and which methods they know are working and which they consider ineffective. "Classroom management" unit with its questions directed the respondent to elaborate on the behaviour of ADHD students, methods used to manage the class, effects of medication, and ADHD students' reaction to success and (constructive) criticism. Finally, while answering the questions in the "suggestions" unit the teacher could highlight effective feedback methods, productive teaching resources, what they consider a successful English lesson, and, most importantly, what principles they consider crucial when teaching students with ADHD.

The interview ended with one concluding question to allow the respondent to add anything they considered necessary. No changes were made to the questions after the first and second interview. The interviews were analysed in accordance with the method of thematic analysis by Braun and Clarke (2006). First, the interviews were transcribed in detail and checked for consistency. Next, the transcriptions were coded and recoded. Then the different codes were sorted into themes to form a thematic table of the main themes and sub-themes. Both deductive and inductive approaches were used in the process of coding

and creating a thematic table. While the deductive or theoretical codes and themes were formulated on the basis of literature, inductive codes and categories stemmed from the interview data. After the final reviewing of the themes altogether 5 main themes and 38 sub-themes were generated. The main themes and sub-themes are presented in Table 5.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| 1. ADHD  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• ADHD symptoms</li> <li>• Boys and girls</li> <li>• Self-esteem</li> <li>• Observations</li> </ul>  |
| 2. ADHD and behaviour  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Behaviour</li> <li>• Attention seeking</li> <li>• Irritants</li> <li>• Emotions</li> <li>• Conflicts</li> <li>• Foul language</li> <li>• Apologizing</li> <li>• Reaction to teacher's instruction</li> <li>• Home-classroom vs teacher's classroom</li> <li>• Discipline at school= discipline on school outings or trips</li> <li>• Effects of medication</li> <li>• ADHD in regular classroom</li> <li>• Small groups</li> </ul> |
| 3. Teaching and learning                                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Objectives</li> <li>• Ways of learning</li> <li>• Learning tools and resources</li> <li>• Excessive zeal</li> <li>• Teacher's role as guide</li> <li>• Motivation</li> <li>• Effective and ineffective methods</li> </ul>  |
| 4. Results and feedback  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Results</li> <li>• Praise= accomplishment</li> <li>• Failure= Criticism</li> <li>• Successful and unsuccessful lessons</li> <li>• Feedback= remarks= problem- solution= family's role as educators</li> <li>• Problems= mistakes= struggle</li> <li>• Encouragement= praise= reward</li> </ul>   |
| 5. Requirements to the teacher and the structure of the lesson | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Structured lesson</li> <li>• Persistence= routine</li> <li>• Intuition= unexpected occurrences= teacher's readiness</li> <li>• Classroom management= teacher's physical presence= teacher's instructions and speech= rapport with students</li> </ul>  |

|  |   |
|--|---|
|  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-control</li> <li>• Emotionality vs learning</li> <li>• Holistic approach</li> </ul> |
|--|---|

Table 5. The main themes and sub-themes

To ensure the validity of the study, the author of the thesis followed the principles of qualitative interviewing and carefully observed the collected data while analysing them. To guarantee the reliability of the study, the author transcribed the interviews verbatim and documented the research process.

### 3.3 Results

The results of the study are presented according the main themes stated above: ADHD, ADHD and behaviour, teaching and learning, results and feedback, requirements to the teacher and the structure of the lesson. The sub-themes are dealt with under the respective main themes.

#### 1. ADHD

This main theme encompasses the respondents' answers which covered ADHD symptoms, the difference of ADHD symptoms in boys and girls, ADHD student's self-esteem, and teachers' observations.

Based on the teachers' responses, students with ADHD are impulsive, restless, experience difficulties with concentration and maintaining attention, and are easily annoyed or angered. They may behave unexpectedly compared to non-ADHD students, for example, climb under the table out of without a noticeable irritant. Fidgeting and inner restlessness cause attention and concentration problems. Although many share these typical signs, ADHD symptoms are different for each person.



*M: This intense impulsivity, every little irritant can agitate them tremendously, so much that sometimes the cause of their irritation cannot be determined.<sup>1</sup>*

The teachers did not have much to say about ADHD differences in boys and girls because they have little experience teaching girls. It was said that girls seem to be impulsive and fidgety, but manage to finish their assignments first. Girls use less foul language than boys. Also, girls might outgrow ADHD sooner than boys. Regardless of gender, students with ADHD tend to have low self-esteem.

The respondents believe they are able to do many things at once and are very intelligent. Sometimes a student with ADHD can hide their symptoms but eventually they cannot resist to moving around. Their distinct symptoms of inattention and inability to concentrate are the cause of their difficulties at school. The teachers have also noticed that the majority of students with ADHD grow out of it, or older ones learn to control it. Sometimes ADHD can, nevertheless, still persist in adulthood, but a person has usually learned to control the symptoms by that time.

## **2. ADHD and behaviour**

The respondents described the general behaviour of students with ADHD. Behaviour was noted as the first sign of ADHD. Restlessness and fidgeting were also mentioned as symptoms. Teachers have noticed the following in lessons with ADHD students: lots of knocking, sounds, chatting, and almost falling off chairs. Students with ADHD are very lively and, fortunately, as they grow, they forget their former problems. It was mentioned that students with ADHD misbehave or break rules to seek attention and when the teacher does not pay attention, the student immediately bothers the other students. ADHD students tend to insult others without thinking, but it was noted that they probably do not actually mean what they are saying.

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<sup>1</sup> Selline impulsiivsus on neil väga suur, et iga väike selline ärritaja võib neid meeletult ärritada niimoodi, et vahel pole arugi saada, misasi see nüüd täpselt oli, mis neid ärritab.

*E: Foul language is unpleasant and inappropriate, but they still, let's say when they lose control, they use foul language indiscriminately.<sup>2</sup>*

The insults and bad mood stem from different irritants, such as, the sound of running water, words taken out of context, different smells, the sound of someone moving around, etc., and can make the student behave unexpectedly. They may start poking other students who might become agitated, leave their desk, and then it is difficult to calm them down. All of this causes the student with ADHD to feel emotional.

*E: Somebody walks by and shouts a completely harmless word that an ordinary person does not even hear, but they are already out of control and completely upset.<sup>3</sup>*

All of these irritants keep students with ADHD from paying attention in lessons and conflicts are easy to surface. For example, they cannot wait for their turn, or they become frustrated and rip their test into tiny pieces, swear uncontrollably, or reflect their frustration due to broken families. Nevertheless, students with ADHD, according to the respondents, know when they have wronged somebody and many of them have found unique ways to apologise. While some students apologise in the traditional way by saying sorry out loud, many of them tend to apologise with their actions instead of words. For example, they do something they know the teacher will appreciate (finishing an assignment at home, rewriting their task, asking for help in a lesson etc.).

Teachers find it difficult to work with students with ADHD because their first reaction is “don't know, can't do, don't want to”. It can be challenging to get them to work. The respondents have noticed that it is easier to work with ADHD students in the same room as often as possible because too many unimportant irritants capture their attention in an unfamiliar room. Also, they tend to be more polite and respectful and more

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<sup>2</sup> Ropud sõnad on ikkagi ebameeldivad ja sobimatud aga nad ikkagi, kui ütleme see tuur neil peale tuleb, siis nad ikka valimatult kasutavad neid roppusi ka.

<sup>3</sup> Keegi läheb mööda ja hõikab no täiesti olematu sõna, mille peale tavainimene ei saa arugi, et oli ksukil, siis nemad on juba täiesti pöördes ja häiritud.

willing to follow the rules in a teacher's classroom than in their home-classroom. It was suggested that it is easier to maintain discipline on a school trip than at school. Nevertheless, there should be an extra supervisor on the trip just in case something unexpected happens.

The respondents' observations on medication suggest that drugs help reduce impulsivity which allows the child to be a regular student. The teachers usually notice when a child is off medication (this may sometimes happen due to financial reasons). Aggressiveness was mentioned as a side effect and, it was also mentioned that medication does not have an effect on everybody.

*I: It is evident from the child's behaviour and, of course, some medication causes side effects. One student became so aggressive, but all in all, they allow the child to be in class.<sup>4</sup>*

It was revealed that it is difficult to teach students with ADHD in a regular class because ADHD students demand a lot of attention at the expense of other students. It disturbs other children when a student with ADHD becomes agitated over seemingly unimportant things like, for example, the dropping of a pen. Smaller groups benefit students with ADHD, and it was suggested that it is easier for both the teacher and learners themselves when the students in the same group have similar symptoms.

*E: Let's put it this way, in a bigger classroom it is extremely difficult. Actually, teaching them goes at the expense of others, it is they who are missing out on something. I would not manage.<sup>5</sup>*

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<sup>4</sup> See on kohe näha lapse käitumisest ja muidugi mõned ravimid annavad kõrvalmõjusid. Üks õpilane muutus ravimitega nii kurjaks aga üldiselt need ravimid ikka lasevad lapsel tunnis olla.

<sup>5</sup> Ütleme niimoodi et suures klassis on ikka ääretult keeruline. Tegelikult tema õpetamine läheb teiste laste arvele. Nemad jäävad millestki ilma. Mina ei saaks hakkama.

### 3. Teaching and learning

The interviews revealed that teachers are persistent and do not make concessions with studying. The respondents manage to teach according to the national curriculum and their teaching is based on the learning outcomes.

The respondents noted that students with ADHD learn differently from regular students. One teacher explicated that although it seems that students with ADHD are inattentive, they are able to do several things at once, so they are comfortable with multitasking. They like to write and draw on the blackboard. They also like games and pictures, matching assignments (pictures, words, or sentences), moving around etc. Assignments should be creative and carefully chosen and acquiring a new learning skill takes more time than with regular students due to their inattentiveness and impulsivity.

Teachers mostly use traditional resources for learning: student books, workbooks, and handouts. ADHD students also like games, for example, Alias, Simon Says, etc., which help improve language skills (vocabulary, pronunciation). They also like moving pictures so employing films without subtitles helps with the development of language instinct. Nevertheless, as one respondent stressed, everything depends on the film and the students' moods.

*M: I have become accustomed to the structure where we learn from the student book, do exercises in a workbook and do worksheets. Less often, let's say, we use a projector to play these internet-based vocabulary games or something, for example, but they still jump up from the table and run to the projection screen, so yeah.<sup>6</sup>*

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<sup>6</sup> Ma olen ikka üsna kindlaks jäänud sellele struktuurile, et õpikust õpime osa ja töövihikust teeme harjutusi, siis teeme töölehti. Nüüd harvem, ütleme siis, kasutame projektorit, et mängime selliseid internetipõhiseid sõnavaramänge näiteks või midagi aga nad ikkagi hüppavad laua tagant püsti ja jooksevad sinna projektori selle seina juurde, et oh jah.

Computer offers endless resources to teachers and ADHD students mostly enjoy playing games on it. They also love to watch others play. ADHD children are very knowledgeable about these games and acquire a lot of vocabulary from different games. The recognition of words or phrases from games helps and motivates them to learn. It was mentioned, however, that interactive games may not always work because the students' attention may disperse or they simply become too emotional and unmanageable. An interesting observation was also that students' personal smart devices may get broken in a fit of anger, whereas they tend to have more respect for schools' equipment, for example, computers. They do not break the computers but they can sometimes rip tests or worksheets into pieces, throw books, or break personal items.

*E: Their smart devices, their phones, they do not last. They tend to get angry at it when, for example, their mum cannot pick up at that moment or they do not succeed to do something in some game, and then they get angry on the phone and smash it onto the ground or out of the window who knows where.<sup>7</sup>*

Students with ADHD may be quite absent-minded, so if they forget their tools for learning, the teacher should provide them. The children feel it is a special privilege to write, for example, with the teacher's pen. Furthermore, it is excellent if teachers can use their own classroom for lessons so they could bring out any necessary resources and tools that suit the students' current moods. The latter is important because sometimes things do not go as planned. ADHD students may play with, for example, a clock model or other toys the way it is not intended, even inappropriately.

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<sup>7</sup> Oma nutiseadmed, oma telefonid, ega need neil vastu ei pea. Nad kipuvad ja vihastavad selle peale näiteks kui ema telefoni vastu ei saa võtta hetkel või mingis mängus midagi ei õnnestu neil, nad vihastavad selle telefoni peale ja viskavad selle põraki kas vastu maad või aknast välja teab kuhu.

*I: I used to bring bags full of toys but children, nowadays, cannot or don't want to play. The only games are where one animal climbs on the back of the other animal and that's all that comes out of it.<sup>8</sup>*

The interviews revealed that playing games for impulsive persons may cause intense feelings, and due to this excessive zeal the teacher's control over the situation may disappear quickly. It may cause inappropriate behavior or even chaos, so games work very well until passion stops them from thinking clearly and behaving appropriately.

*M: Well, maybe it can be said that games which can get too competitive are ineffective in their case. These are like extra irritants. These games tend to cause chaos and then it is very difficult to regain order to even think about continuing working on something else.<sup>9</sup>*

The interviewees stressed that the teacher is the guide in the process of learning so the teacher must know how to effectively encourage the student to work. They also accentuated that stressing progress and praising motivates students with ADHD. Shorter lessons can be used to motivate the students to pay attention, work along. It can also be a reward to them for good behaviour. Also, assigning no homework for good behaviour motivates them to focus and work harder.

The responses of the teachers indicated that methods which normally work (even if they have been carefully chosen) may sometimes prove to be ineffective. The choice of teaching methods depends on the students' character and interests, the topic, the teacher, and the current emotional state of students. The following were said to be effective methods: conversation, discussion on different topics, describing a picture, reading and translating in pairs (sentence by sentence), learning independent learning skills, and even

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<sup>8</sup> Varasemalt ma kasutasin hästi palju mänguasju, kottide täied mänguasju aga praegused lapsed ei oska või ei läbe mängida. Ainukesed mängud on niisugused, et üks loom ronib teise selga ja muud mängust välja ei tule.

<sup>9</sup> Nojah võib-olla ongi nende puhul ikkagi see, et sellised mängud, mis võivad minna võistluslikuks, et need ei tööta nende puhul. Need on nagu lisa ärritajad. Need mängulised asjad kipuvad kaost tekitama ja siis on nagu väga raske seda korda tagasi saada, et üldse midagi muud edasi teha.

writing if students with ADHD have the willpower and strength for it. When attention starts to fade, it helps to ask them in a random order. When ADHD students cross boundaries, it works very well to calmly repeat the rules and expectations over and over again and explain how the student could behave better. Not everything works with these students, so ineffective methods are: (long) writing assignments, games that incite excessive zeal (they cause irritation, annoyance and eventually chaos), reading aloud in front of the class, learning a poem by heart, or singing (due to low self-esteem).

#### **4. Results and feedback**

The respondents informed that the results are not better or worse compared to regular students. ADHD students do not experience a lot of problems with the most common, everyday phrases and, generally, their pronunciation is good. Nevertheless, ADHD influences students' progress considerably and may even hinder it. Those who play computer games more, have a better English language instinct.

The teachers mentioned that when students with ADHD succeed in something, they react "*as if at a football match*"<sup>10</sup> because they enjoy success and react very positively to it. They also enjoy marking scores on the blackboard, and they like to win (games, quizzes, etc.) or perform well. On the contrary, they react negatively to failure, "*also as if at a football match*"<sup>11</sup>. They become agitated, scream, break tests into tiny pieces, throw books, walk out of the classroom. Criticism seems unjust to them and that is why they usually react defiantly first (make facial expressions, make noises, etc.) and understand the essence of it later. The teachers suggest going over the mistakes one by one and giving ADHD students an opportunity to correct themselves first.

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<sup>10</sup> I: Nagu jalgpallivõistlustel.

<sup>11</sup> I: Kah nagu jalgpallivõistlustel.

*M: There is a lot of knocking, vocalising, swinging on chairs so that I don't know, it is scary sometimes. This motoric restlessness is often very strong.*<sup>12</sup>

The teachers agreed that the lesson succeeds when there has been a little bit of learning, children worked along and do not run away when tired. Also, when all the children and teacher leave in a good mood, everybody is healthy and well, and school property, equipment or facilities have not been damaged. They warned that all lessons do not succeed.

*E: When all the kids are alive, well and happy. Yes, whether we played or drew, when all the children are alive, happy and healthy and no one attacked somebody else and school property has not been damaged.*<sup>13</sup>

The interviewees revealed that feedback is extremely important. As feedback, for example, students with ADHD like stickers (in their notebooks, diaries, etc.), and even older students like them as much as younger ones. They may not pay attention to an oral remark, so feedback in a written form is a good idea. Teachers can give direct feedback effectively through schools' web applications (Stuudium, e-kool) for the students and parents, or simply call the parents. A remark in a diary or notebook is not effective because it causes them to become agitated and the students may sabotage the remark by scribbling something on it or deleting it. In case of problems, feedback should also include a comment telling the students what they could have done better, so a teacher should always offer a solution to a problem. Speaking in private to the student is also effective. The families who work hard with managing ADHD students' behavior were also acknowledged.

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<sup>12</sup> Palju on selliseid koputamisi, häälitsemisi, tooliga kõikumisi on nii, et ma ei tea, hirm on nahas vahepeal. Selline motoorne rahutus on neil hästi tugev sageli.

<sup>13</sup> Kui kõik lapsed on elus, terved ja õnnelikud. Jah, kas me nüüd seal mängisime või me joonistasime, kui kõik lapsed on elusad rõõmsad ja terved, keegi kellelegi pole kallale läinud, midagi pole koolivarast ära lõhutud.



The respondents noted that students with ADHD have similar problems in English and other subjects. They have problems with grammar, acquiring unfamiliar vocabulary and pronunciation. Learning new expressions and sentence structures may prove to be problematic as well. They have no problem with spontaneous interaction thanks to computer games and films. Problems arise when they think they know something but actually should pay more attention to learning. Teaching younger students with ADHD is, of course, more difficult. Mistakes occur easily because faster moving (e.g. games, writing) means more mistakes and strong emotions (anger). Also, working along in lessons and following teachers' instructions is hard. Although their individual marks may be lower, it does not stop them from managing in life (they may cope better than we assume).

The responses of the teachers stressed that ADHD students need lots of encouragement to reach goals. They react very positively when they succeed, and they expect the teacher and classmates to praise them and acknowledge them. Praise after every sentence is expected. Besides praise, playing games is important as it is a means to motivate ADHD students to work harder. Being unnecessarily critical does not work at all. Misbehaviour should not be stressed at all. Instead, praise for stopping inappropriate behavior encourages them to try and continue working. Promising them a shorter lesson or no homework effectively encourages them to actively work and try to stay on track.

## **5. Requirements to the teacher and the structure of the lesson**

The teachers conceded that although it would be nice to employ lots of game elements, they may lead to fervor. The structure of the lesson should routinely be the same, so students would know what to do. Lessons must have a similar structure, so the lessons should begin and end the same way, tasks should be written on the blackboard the same way, time should be indicated on the blackboard the same way. Structure means that students know the boundaries to ensure discipline. They may be absent-minded so they

need to be told again what lesson begins, what they had to do at home, and, at the end of the lesson, what has been learnt in the lesson. When students know that they always do a little from the book, a little from the workbook, and a little on the worksheets, then they are less defiant to teachers' instructions. If a teacher gives an instruction, it must not be reconsidered. The key words are structure, routine, and persistence.

*E: Let's say towards the end of the lesson there may be a situation when a teacher says "now we need to do this exercise and then one more and then there's the break" then this is how it's supposed to be not "hang on, don't go yet, let's do a third and fourth exercise as well", that doesn't work.<sup>14</sup>*

There was consensus on intuition being the most important quality. The teacher must know when one or another resource is appropriate to use and likely to be efficient. They must pick the right moment and remember that practice makes perfect. A novice at teaching would want to do as was initially planned but quite often the situation does not allow it.

*I: It's like this, you can prepare for the lesson, oh all kinds of methods and stuff, but you go to the classroom and see what mood the students are in, what goes today, so basically [teaching methods] depend on the prevailing mood in the classroom.<sup>15</sup>*

The respondents warned that plans can change easily. As a teacher you never know what happens next. A teacher has to be ready that something negative has happened which hinders learning. A teacher must always know which activities follow in sequence and cannot run out of activities. A teacher cannot let go even for a second because students

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<sup>14</sup>Ütleme tunni lõpu poole on just see olukord, et kui õpetaja ütleb, et "nüüd on see harjutus teha ja veel üks harjutus teha ja siis on vahetund", siis peabki nii olema aga mitte nii, et "oota oota, ärge veel ära minge", et "teeme nüüd selle kolmanda või neljanda harjutuse ka ära", see ei tööta.

<sup>15</sup> See asi on niimoodi et sa võid kodus ette valmistada selle tunni suurepärast, oi igasugused meetodid ja värgid, lähed klassi, vaatad missuguses meeleolus on õpilased, mis täna üldse sobib, nii et põhiliselt sellest meeleolust, mis seal klassis valitseb, sellest olenebki.

immediately take advantage and become difficult to control. Having to be creative, logical, persistent, and prepared for anything all the time is, naturally, difficult for a teacher.

Students with ADHD make the conducting of a lesson that much harder. When a child becomes restless, it is wise to give them a task that involves moving, a task on a mobile, or they can simply draw. A teacher should give the kind of assignments that suit the students. Agreements, rewards, praise, and phone calls to parents are good methods to manage the classroom. If students need calming down, the teacher can allow them to change places if necessary. If attention needs to be captured, the teacher can either raise or lower the voice or become silent completely. Also, approaching a student and directly speaking to the student in a calm voice and assertive tone should also work.

According to the interviews, the teacher has to be close enough to be able to reach each student to avoid problems. A teacher should also be prominent and audible. It is not uncommon for students with ADHD to look for physical contact with teachers by touching them. The teacher's instructions must be concrete, clear and uttered in simple sentences. Instructions should also be written down in case ADHD students miss what the teacher says. Instructions should be in English only when the teacher is certain that everybody understands them. Furthermore, teaching can only take effect once the teacher has good rapport with students.

*I. A teacher has to be big, tall and stout to stand out in the classroom [laughs].<sup>16</sup>*

The respondents highlighted that a teacher to ADHD students has to be very calm and cannot become upset easily. In case of tiredness, a teacher cannot let it show but rather have the students do something they love instead (e.g. draw). When somebody uses foul language, a teacher must stay calm and not show emotions or frustration but, instead, commend the student for stopping the swearing and proceeding with work. A teacher

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<sup>16</sup> Õpetaja peab olema suur, pikk ja paks, et klassi ees välja paistaks [naerab].

should, therefore, not highlight the unwanted behavior but focus on the subsequent positive behavior. Meaningless arguing is useless. When a teacher experiences setbacks or failure, they should not blame themselves nor anybody else. Staying calm, keeping one's cool and not taking things personally is of vital importance.

To conclude, the respondents stressed that the emotional side is more important than the academic side of learning. Behaviour management mostly overshadows the academic side of a lesson: about half of the lessons is spent learning, the other half is spent doing other activities. If something is left undone, the teacher can always do it next time. Learning is important but it does not need to happen at “the right time” and at “the right place. Teaching a child with ADHD must be a holistic approach that takes all the specificities of ADHD into account.

*I: A lot of work has to be done with the behavioural part and let's say there is that much less learning.<sup>17</sup>*

*E: If 20 minutes out of a lesson is spent on learning and the rest is spent doing something else, drawing, colouring, puzzles, I still try to teach and whether they learn this way or learn that way, and from different resources and at different times, they probably do learn.<sup>18</sup>*

### 3.4 Discussion

The aim of the research was to find out how English is taught to students with ADHD in Estonia. The results are first discussed according to the research questions. The

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<sup>17</sup> Hästi palju tuleb tegeleda selle käitumusliku poolega ja ütleme seda akadeemilist poolt jääb nagu selle võrra vähem.

<sup>18</sup> Kui tunnist ütleme 20 minutit on õppimist ja siis ülejäänud läheb mingi muu tegevuse peale, joonistamise, värvimise, mõistatamiste peale, ma ikkagi üritan õpetada ka ja õpivad nad sedamoodi või õpivad natuke teistmoodi ja teistest vahenditest ja teistel hetkedel, küllap nad õpivad.

answers to the research questions are provided in a sequential order under the respective research questions.

### **1. What are the symptoms of ADHD in boys and girls and what difficulties do they experience while learning English?**

The respondents' answers highlighted the most common symptoms of ADHD in students with ADHD. Since the teachers participating in the study had had little experience teaching English to ADHD girls, most of their characterisation was of boys. The most obvious symptoms of ADHD are inattention, impulsiveness, restlessness, the inability to concentrate, and unexpected behaviour. The results also affirmed that ADHD students are easily annoyed, agitated, and get into conflicts more often than average students. These symptoms overlap with the descriptions provided by the CDC (2015a,b), NIMH (n.d.b: para.: 12), Mahar and Chalmers (2007), Gerard (2010: 10), Munden and Arcelus (2010: 20-23), Feldman (2002: 94-98), and Kutscher (2007: 42).

The teachers' responses predictably suggested that there are less ADHD girls than ADHD boys (Brown 2015, Dray et al 2006, Nadeau 2004, NPR 2008). This discrepancy could be explained by supposing that girls mostly belong to the quiet inattentive type and, therefore, go unnoticed or because girls, perhaps, "grow out" of ADHD faster than boys (their symptoms lessen because they mature quicker than boys). The interviews confirmed that the proportion of boys diagnosed with ADHD is significantly higher than that of girls. Although studies and articles (Gerard 2010, Low 2014, Nadeau 2004b) have suggested that girls' symptoms are different from boys, this cannot be confirmed in this study due to insufficient data.

Problems with attention and concentration may possibly lead to poorer progress and results if ADHD symptoms are not managed and accommodations for the students are not made. This problem was studied by Penny Corkum, Melissa McGonnell and Russell

Schachar (2010: 9) who found that about “72% of the sample was underachieving”, “despite the fact that the average estimated IQ was at the higher end of the Average range”, which implies that ADHD students have the intellect and multitasking abilities to thrive, yet do not seem to reach their full potential due to difficulties caused by their unmanaged symptoms. The interviewed teachers explained that most ADHD students are more intelligent than an average student, but their symptoms can, nevertheless, cause difficulties that lead to problems with learning and poorer results.

The most common difficulties that students with ADHD experience while learning English (and other subjects) are the following: grammar, pronunciation, vocabulary acquisition problems, messy handwriting and difficulties finishing a written task, poor time management and reading skills, insufficient auditory processing, and inability to follow teachers’ instructions. The respondents’ answers coincided with the findings of Greathead (n.d), Turketi (2010), and the U.S. Department of Education (2008). These difficulties cause them to have low self-esteem, anxiety, nervousness, etc., (Mahar and Chalmers 2007: 8, Nadeau 2004a) which prevent them from having the courage and confidence to perform under classmates’ scrutiny. However, the student can be taught to overcome these difficulties, avoid problems, and improve results. ADHD can hinder learning considerably but not necessarily and the problem lessens with age according to the personal experience of the respondents.

## **2. What teaching strategies and teaching methods are used to teach English to students with ADHD?**

It was revealed that teachers should be persistent and that teaching should be based on the students’ ADHD symptoms, the topic, and the learning outcomes. It should be noted that ADHD students learn differently from regular students. In order to control their impulsiveness, English lesson, just like any other lesson, must have structure. Lessons

should, therefore, always begin the same way, be conducted the same way, and concluded the same way, as also explicated by the U.S Department of Education (2008) and Leons et al (2009). This ensures that the students always know what the teacher expects from them so they obey to the rules more willingly. The structure of the lesson, therefore, should be the same continuously to help the students concentrate. The teacher must always, though, be prepared for unexpected behavior to occur, which can change the course of the lesson. It was stressed in the interviews that the classroom should be the same for three reasons: the teacher has the necessary resources at hand, the students respect the teacher's rules more willingly, and the students do not have new distractions in the classroom environment. If ADHD students become difficult to manage due to irritants or frustration, it is a good idea, according to the participants in the interview, to assign them to their favourite activity in order for them to calm down and refocus their energy on another activity.

While regular students are more compliant to work with longer texts or written exercises, students with ADHD require more stimulating activities to help them focus. The respondents gave a list of methods that usually work with ADHD students in English lessons: exercises that involve physical movement, (computer) games, different creative matching exercises, videos and films (without subtitles), conversation and discussion on different topics, describing a picture, reading and translating in pairs (short sections of text at a time), and even writing if ADHD students have the necessary amount of energy and focus. Some of these methods have been suggested by the U.S Department of Education (2008), Turketi (2010), Gerard (2010), and Greathead (n.d.).

It may be counterproductive to use longer writing assignments, make them read aloud or perform in front of the class, allow them to play games that incite excessive zeal to the point that they become irritated. Concentration problems make it difficult for ADHD students to finish tasks and stay attentive. If they become too excited, it prevents them

from learning because, as teachers have learnt and experienced, ADHD students find it problematic to control their emotions.

Computer games are often used by the respondents to help the students with vocabulary and pronunciation acquisition, which are also recommended by the U.S. Department of Education (2008). As the respondents noted, interactive games work most of the time, so it could be used as a reward. The results indicate that computer games are effective as long as ADHD student do not become too passionate and excessively excited. Overreacting with emotions could lead them to conflicts with others and imposed rules. Therefore, the teachers interviewed mostly use traditional resources for learning: student books, workbooks, and handouts.

The teachers elucidated why methods which normally work may sometimes, unexpectedly, prove to be ineffective. ADHD students may be forgetful and absent-minded, or moody, so what is effective and what is ineffective greatly depends on several factors. The teachers have to be supporting, calm, and assertive. If the students have to be reminded of a task, the teacher reminds them. If the student has forgotten a book or a pen, the teacher provides it. The teacher's task is to make any accommodations necessary to help ADHD students to focus on learning and acquiring English, therefore, the teacher must know how to encourage the student to work by using different forms of encouragement, such as, positive reassurance, praise, rewards, no homework, etc.

### **3. What methods are used to manage the behaviour of an ADHD student?**

The behaviour of an ADHD student either supports learning or hinders it, therefore, managing the behavior of such a student is vital. Fidgeting, chatting, random comments, knocking, leaving the desk, etc., can make it difficult for students with ADHD to learn, so the teacher has to know how to help the students control their ADHD symptoms. The



respondents' description of the behaviour of students with ADHD corresponds with the findings in other studies (Turketi 2010; Geng 2011).

The results suggest that ADHD students misbehave to seek attention, therefore, as the respondents mentioned, it is unwise to stress the inappropriate behavior of the students and, instead, commend them for improving their behavior. Gerard (2010: 16) also finds that praise helps to reinforce appropriate behaviour. Praise motivates them to try to seek attention with positive actions. If a student uses foul language, again, calm explanation is recommended because a negative reaction from the teacher would only further agitate an ADHD student. Teachers cannot control all the students' triggers for agitation but teachers have to know how to be able to calm them down again and how to keep them away from conflicts.

In case of conflicts, normal conventions of apologizing are expected from ADHD students. Although they may be more emotional than regular students, they should be able to realise when they have wronged somebody and know how to apologise. The respondents had noticed that although many students with ADHD may not seemingly apologise, they might do it in a peculiar way. It was noted that they try to do something good to rectify their mistakes, even if it is something small and seemingly unimportant, for example, finishing an exercise or writing a timetable in a diary. It is important for the teacher to know different manners of conflict resolution of ADHD students so problems could be solved and learning could continue.

Teachers have to be persistent and not let the students' initial opposition to instructions disturb them and continue with the intended plan when there are no unnecessary irritants around to keep the students from learning. Surprisingly, the ADHD students can be easier to discipline outside of school than in the classroom. Since their behavior can change quickly, it is important to bring an extra supervisor on a school trip

though, to ensure safety and discipline, in case something unexpected happens. Medication may reduce the students' impulsivity and make them more obedient to instructions, but it can also cause side effects, such as, anxiety, insomnia, personality changes, mood swings, etc., so caution must be taken.

The results indicate that teaching English to a student in a regular classroom is a complicated task, especially, if there is more than one student with ADHD present in the classroom. The respondents explained that it is easier to teach ADHD students in a smaller group, so each student would get enough attention and support. Moreover, the teacher has enough energy to manage the classroom and teach English at the same time. Regular students may find it difficult to accept that students with ADHD seemingly have different rules in the classroom.

#### **4. What teaching resources are effective with ADHD students?**

The results reveal that teachers consider the most traditional tools and resources effective with ADHD students. They predominantly use traditional student books, workbooks, handouts, and games (Alias, Simon Says, computer games) to develop language skills. Videos may and may not be effective depending on the content of the video and task accompanying it. It is advised to employ films without subtitles in English lessons to help with the development of language instinct and, again, language skills.

Teachers can access endless resources to English teachers online that could be used with ADHD students. They play a large variety of games on their personal smart devices and computers through which they acquire vocabulary and pronunciation. If ADHD students like games and, for example, vocabulary activities on a computer, then teachers could use all kinds of interactive feedback facilities which range from jeopardy to quizzes available through smart devices. Also, if computer games stimulate them to study, then playing different vocabulary games should be encouraged.

The respondents stressed that students with ADHD enjoy drawing. Their energy could be harnessed in different projects where they could make use of this skill and, at the same time, learn English as well. For example, poster contests could be held or contests for illustrated short stories, or even poems. The students could practice time management skills, polish their drawing skills, practice focusing, and learn general competences, particular vocabulary, or particular language skills intended to be acquired with the task or project.

In the following, some overarching and general issues stemming from the results will be discussed. As evidenced by the results of the thesis, ADHD students can effectively learn in a small group because sometimes it may take 20-25 minutes of a 45-minute lesson to discipline the students and to accommodate for their special needs. Even an experienced teacher has to first intuitively identify the group's general mood and find a way to keep their emotions balanced. Excessively dramatic emotions may be the reason why students with ADHD find it difficult to control themselves and follow instructions, need attention and affirmation more than a regular student, as well as need structure to remind them of what is expected of them. Sticking with the routine helps ADHD students to acquire the skills of self-management, learning, and social competences among other skills.

Sometimes it may seem as if there is little studying in the lessons of ADHD children. The experiences of the interviewed teachers of English indicate that this idea is misleading. The most important aspect of teaching English to ADHD students is giving them constant feedback and helping them with self-management step by step. In order to ensure better results in English, the teacher has to manage the classroom, provide feedback and encouragement. As the teachers suggested, poor and insufficient feedback leads to problems with self-control which, in turn, leads to disrupting the class and hindering progress. "The "sink or swim" approach works poorly with ADHD" (Kutscher 2007: 57),

so help and feedback should be provided as soon as the situation demands it. Stephen E. Brock, Bethany Grove, and Melanie Searls (2010) emphasise that feedback should be immediate, frequent and different tokens may be given to motivate the students. Managed classroom depends on feedback, and the latter encourages quality. The teachers consider the lesson a success if everyone leaves in high spirits. Teacher's constant feedback about subject-related aspects and behavioural aspects are inseparable and this holistic approach helps ensure success with ADHD students.

English teachers have to view the teaching of an ADHD student as a whole. The symptoms need to be controlled, the behaviour needs to be managed, and different strategies need to be taught to ensure the student can control one's emotions and learn independently. Skills taught in English lessons greatly benefit the students' progress in other subjects as well, because, as the respondents noted, the difficulties that ADHD students experience are similar despite the subject. This is why teachers also have to consider integration of subject matter. If we want our students to become happy and competent individuals, we cannot only focus on English in a narrow sense because there can be no learning if the problem of ADHD is not dealt with in a holistic way.

The following two subsections of discussion serve to highlight the key issues concerning the methods of teaching and suggestions for teaching English to ADHD students.

### **3.4.1 Methods used to teach students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder**

The success of any method depends on the emotional state of ADHD students. The teachers should remember that they cannot control everything, therefore, initial plans may not be always possible to follow and this should not be seen as a problem.

ADHD students need a release for their excessive energy, so teachers should use teaching methods which incorporate physical movement. If it is not enough, the teacher can allow them to move more by assigning them special (delivery) tasks, which enable the student to feel important and necessary and manage their excessive energy at the same time. Energy could be harnessed by playing interactive vocabulary and other language learning related games on computers or smart devices as long as it does not make them overly excited (to the point they become difficult to control).

As the results revealed, no special methods are required to teach English to ADHD students. The teacher has to test and monitor which methods work most of the time and employ them more. Furthermore, the teacher has to capture the right moment for one or another method. The methods that usually work with ADHD students in English lessons are, then, exercises that involve physical movement, computer games, board games, different matching exercises, film clips, speaking tasks, and pair activities.

Besides teaching methods, teachers should pay attention to different methods of positive reinforcement. Feedback methods and positive reinforcement methods should be carefully chosen depending on the case because both are essential in the teaching process of ADHD students. Usually, written praise and remarks in the schools' student information systems prove to be effective. Also, parents should be contacted not only in case of problems but also to commend the child for progressing in learning or behaviour to encourage them to develop further.

All in all, suitable methods should be considered for teaching, feedback and praise, and the management of symptoms and behaviour for the effective learning of the English language in the case of ADHD students.

### **3.4.2 Suggestions for teaching English to students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder**

Teachers of English should consider several aspects when teaching students with ADHD. On the basis of the results of the study, suggestions are made about which aspects to consider in order to successfully teach a student with ADHD.

First of all, the teacher should start with getting to know the students and keeping structure in mind. Knowing the students helps us understand what ADHD means and how it makes the students behave and what struggles they may experience. Structure is important with these students because doing the same routine all over again ensures their awareness of the boundaries and the (parents', teachers', classmates', schools') expectations. The teacher has to identify which teaching methods and resources work with particular students and which do not. Most people need a change in the routine now and again, so when something new is attempted, teachers should be ready for anything, including calming the students down again while remaining calm themselves. Also, teachers should notice, when an ADHD child makes an attempt at apologizing and support their efforts to correct their behaviour.

Secondly, it is advised to use one and the same classroom and small groups for English lessons. This enables the teacher to vary activities according to the students' moods. This is especially effective because the teacher can easily access and retrieve all kinds of games, matching and other activities. Also, the same classroom ensures that children are not distracted by new things, lots of classmates, sounds, colours, or even smells. Furthermore, the students feel like guests in the teacher's classroom (as opposed to their home-classroom) and are, therefore, prone to conforming to the rules with less opposition, and the teacher can manage a small group more effectively in order to teach English to students with ADHD.

Thirdly, constant feedback is the key to encouraging and motivating ADHD

students. Praise and reward work very well. Rewards can be stickers which could, perhaps, be exchanged for some larger reward, for example, no homework, or 10 minutes of favourite activity (drawing, computer games), or some other privileges. This could help the child understand that work needs to be done in order to be able to obtain further goals. The more the student tries, the sweeter the reward is, and the more enthusiasm and motivation there most likely will be. Feedback is also important to parents, especially in a written form or in the form of a phone call.

Fourthly, teachers have to be patient and must never lose temper. Students with ADHD have to deal with irritants from many different sources. The teacher should understand that adding another stress factor to the equation (reprimanding) only escalates the situation. Students with ADHD need positive reinforcement in order to develop the necessary competences to become happy and curious individual who succeed in reaching their goals.

Finally, it can be said that the acquisition of the English language cannot be expected from ADHD students, unless the teacher considers the children's symptoms, difficulties, competences, and special needs that require necessary accommodations as a whole and pays attention to each distinct aspect of ADHD by getting to know the students' individual traits and learning how to manage the classroom as a whole and effectively teach at the same time.

### **3.4.3 Limitations and practical value**

The author considers the size of the sample, on the one hand, to be a limitation of the current thesis. On the other hand, the data obtained by the three interviews overlapped in the case of most important findings and, therefore, the author deduces that saturation

was reached. Nevertheless, it may be useful to repeat the study with a larger sample in order to collect information from a larger variety of respondents. The thesis is of practical value to the teachers of English in Estonia who lack knowledge about ADHD but need to teach English to ADHD students or students with some characteristics of ADHD. However, in light of the findings of the present thesis it is clear that English teachers cannot be expected to accomplish the challenging task of teaching the students with ADHD without appropriate professional training and supportive measures, such as special education classes. As it could be concluded from the studies by Õim (2004) and Leppsaar (2013), teachers' knowledge about ADHD continues to be insufficient in Estonia. Therefore, there is a clear need to include the topic of teaching English to students with ADHD into the teacher training programmes for aspiring and in-service teachers.



## CONCLUSION

ADHD causes students to have specific needs, which have to be accommodated or teaching and learning may prove ineffective. The prevalence of ADHD is estimated at around 5%, which makes teaching English to ADHD children a relevant issue, especially considering research indicating low knowledge of ADHD among teachers in Estonia. Teachers should be prepared to be able to accommodate the students' needs and choose effective teaching methods to teach English to students with ADHD, manage the students' behaviour, consider their unique characteristics, teach them self-management and help them develop learning competences.

Teachers of English to ADHD students cannot only concentrate on the specificities of teaching English but need to approach students with a holistic view that encompasses all the important aspects connected to teaching students with ADHD. The aim is to teach the students as much as possible as well as help them grow into responsible individuals by developing the general competences laid out in the National Curriculum for Basic School (2011). Specific attention should be paid not only to the content of learning but also how the lessons are conducted and how the students' needs are met.

The aim of the present thesis was to explore how English is taught to students with ADHD. It must be kept in mind that ADHD students can achieve the same results as regular students if the teacher knows how to motivate the students to learn and how to manage their symptoms and behaviour so that learning could take place. The teacher should know how to approach each student considering their individual characteristics, and how to minimise the effect of ADHD on the students' results.

Although ADHD may cause unique symptoms in children, there are, nevertheless, common characteristics that teachers should be aware of. Impulsiveness, inattentiveness, restlessness, and hyperactivity make learning complicated for ADHD students because

they may not pay attention, they are easily distracted and agitated, and have poor time management and organisational skills. This is why teaching English to ADHD students should take place in small groups, so that the teacher could pay attention to each student in order to effectively manage the classroom. Also, the teacher has to approach the problem of ADHD in a holistic manner, considering each aspect, such as symptoms, behaviour, medication, learning difficulties, weak or inept social skills, and special talents that make the student unique, in order to teach English, and, at the same time help them grow into successful members of society. Since the number of ADHD students is increasing, the experiences of experts in the field of teaching English to students with ADHD are not only practical but indispensable.

In the theoretical part of the thesis, an overview was provided, first of all, of the most important aspects of ADHD and its manifestation in boys and girls, and, secondly, of their most common difficulties in the classroom and the nuances of teaching English to ADHD students. ADHD symptoms may be different in boys and girls which may be challenging for a teacher who may not even notice that a girl may have ADHD. Estonian teachers of English had little or no experience with ADHD girls. Despite gender, studies indicate that the symptoms and behaviour of an ADHD student must be managed before teaching and learning become effective. No special methods are required to teach English to students with ADHD. Nevertheless, methods which work most of the time may prove useless at times. The ability to choose the most effective methods requires experience and good rapport with students.

The empirical part of the thesis discussed the results of the semi-structured interviews carried out by the author of the thesis with three teachers of English to students diagnosed with ADHD to find out how English is taught to ADHD students in Estonia. The description of the sample, analysis of the results and consequent discussion are provided in

this section. A qualitative method was used to analyse the data and the questions of interest were: what the symptoms of ADHD in boys and girls are and what difficulties they experience while learning English, what teaching strategies and teaching methods are employed to teach English to ADHD students, what methods are effective for behaviour management, and what teaching resources are fruitful with ADHD students. In order to answer these questions, semi-structured interviews were conducted with three English teachers to ADHD students in Estonia.

The results of the study revealed that although ADHD causes unique characteristics in a person, there are general guidelines on how to effectively teach English to students with ADHD. The respondents explained the necessity to approach students with ADHD with a holistic strategy that encompasses the management of symptoms, behaviour, and accommodation of the students' needs. The results stress the importance of feedback, classroom management, and the correct choice of teaching strategies and teaching methods.

The teachers interviewed use a variety of methods that usually work with ADHD students in English lessons: tasks that incorporate physical movement, different games, matching exercises, videos, speaking tasks, tasks involving pictures, and working in pairs. Ineffective methods, on the other hand, may be longer writing tasks, assignments that demand concentration, activities that may make an ADHD child vulnerable to criticism (performing, reading aloud, learning by heart), and games that provoke emotional conflicts. Lastly, some suggestions are given to ensure effective teaching and learning of English with ADHD students.

To summarise, the current thesis has provided an overview of the most prevalent symptoms of ADHD, the difficulties ADHD students are subject to, behavioural characteristics, and how these aspects should be considered as a whole to ensure effective

teaching and learning of English as a foreign language. The interviews provided an extensive insight into the teaching of English to students with ADHD. This thesis could be used by English teachers to improve their knowledge of ADHD and learn from the experience of expert teachers.

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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix 1 Interview questions**

#### **I INTRODUCTORY QUESTION**

How did you become a teacher of English to students with ADHD?

#### **II SYMPTOMS**

What are the first things you notice about a student with ADHD?

How does ADHD affect students' performance?

What kind of difficulties do they experience? What kind of difficulties do they experience while learning English?

What are the symptoms of ADHD in boys and girls?

#### **III METHODS**

What kind of teaching strategies do you use when dealing specifically with students with ADHD?

What does the choice of your teaching strategies depend on?

What kind of methods work most of the time?

What kind of methods do not often work?

#### **IV CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT**

How would you describe the behaviour of students with ADHD?

What kind of methods do you use to effectively manage your classroom?

What kind of effect does being under medication have on students with ADHD?

How do students with ADHD react to successes? How do they react to failure or criticism?

#### **V SUGGESTIONS**

What kind of methods of giving feedback are effective with ADHD students?

What kind of resources are effective with ADHD students?

What makes a successful lesson?

What are the most important aspects of teaching ADHD students?

#### **VI CONCLUDING QUESTION**

Is there anything you would like to add?

## **Appendix 2 General competences in the National Curriculum for Basic Schools in Estonia**

(National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2014: §4).

- 1) value competence – ability to evaluate human relations and activities from the standpoint of generally accepted moral norms; to sense and value one's ties with other people, nature, the cultural heritage of one's own country and nation and those of others, and events in contemporary culture; to value art and to shape the sense of aesthetics;
- 2) social competence – the ability to become self-actualized, to function as an aware and conscientious citizen and to support the democratic development of society; to know and follow values and standards in society and the rules of various environments; to engage in cooperation with other people; to accept interpersonal differences and take them into account in interacting with people;
- 3) self-management competence – the ability to understand and evaluate oneself, one's weaknesses and strengths; to adhere to healthful lifestyles; to find solutions to problems related to oneself, one's mental and physical health as well as to problems arising in human relations;
- 4) learning to learn competence – ability to organize the learning environment and procure the information they need for learning; to plan studies and follow the plan; to use the outcome of the learning, including learning skills and strategies, in different contexts and for solving problems; to analyze one's knowledge and skills, strengths and weaknesses and on that basis, the need for further learning;
- 5) communication competence – ability to clearly and relevantly express oneself, taking into account situations and partners in communication; to present and justify their positions; to read and understand information and literature; to write different types of texts, using appropriate linguistic devices and a suitable style; to prioritize correct use of language and rich expressive language;
- 6) mathematics competence – the ability to use the language, symbols and methods characteristic of mathematical applications, to solve various situations in all walks of life and spheres of activity
- 7) entrepreneurship competence – ability to create ideas and implement them, using the acquired knowledge and skills in different walks of life; to see problems and the opportunities that lie within them; to set goals and carry them out; to organize joint activities, show initiative and take responsibility for results; to react flexibly to changes and to take judicious risks.

### **Appendix 3 Description of required cross-curricular topics**

(National Curriculum for Basic Schools 2014: §14)

1) Lifelong learning and career planning – the aim is for the student to develop into a person who is prepared to learn lifelong, perform different roles in a changing educational, living and work environments and shape his or her life through conscious decisions, including making of reasonable career choices;

2) environment and sustainable development – the aim is for the student to become a socially active, responsible and environmentally conscious person who preserves and protects the environment, and by valuing sustainability, is prepared to find solutions to issues pertaining to the environment and human development;

3) civic initiative and entrepreneurship – the aim is for the student to become an active and responsible member of the community and society who understands the principles and mechanisms of the functioning of society and the importance of civic initiative, feels like a member of society and draws on the country's cultural traditions and development directions in his or her activities;

4) cultural identity – the aim is for the student to develop into a person who is culturally aware, who understands the role of culture in shaping people's thought and behaviour and who knows how cultures have changed over history, who has acquired an idea of versatility of cultures and particularities of lifestyles determined by culture and who values native culture and cultural diversity and is culturally tolerant and prepared for cooperation;

5) information environment – the aim is for the student to develop into an information-conscious person who senses and aware of the surrounding information environment, is able to analyze it critically and acts according to his or her aims and society's communications ethics;

6) technology and innovation – the aim is for the student to develop into a person who is

well-disposed toward innovation and who knows how to use contemporary technologies in a goal-oriented manner, who copes with the rapidly changing technological living, learning and work environment;

7) health and safety – the aim is for the student to develop into a mentally, emotionally, socially and physically healthy member of society who is capable of following healthful lifestyles, acting in a safe manner and taking part in developing a health promoting environment;

8) values and morals – the aim is for the student to develop into a morally advanced person, who knows the generally recognized values and moral principles in society, follows the in school and outside school, who does not remain indifferent when they are flouted, and intervenes in accordance with his or her abilities when necessary.

**RESÜMEE**  
**TARTU ÜLIKOOL**  
**INGLISE FILOLOOGIA OSAKOND**

**Merilen Ivask**

**Teaching English to students with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)**  
**(Inglise keele õpetamine aktiivsuse- ja tähelepanuhäirega õpilastele)**

Magistritöö

2015

Lehekülgede arv: 79

Annotatsioon:

Kaasav hariduspoliitika, häirete diagnostika paranemine ja teadlikkuse tõus on suurendanud vajalikkust õpetaja valmisolekuks õpetada ATH diagnoosiga lapsi. Käesolev magistritöö uurib inglise keele õpetamise spetsiifikat ATH-ga õpilaste õpetamisel. Valdav enamus ATH-ga õpilastest omandavad haridust tavakoolides. Seega on vajalik, et tavakoolide õpetajad omavad teadmisi ATH-st ja erivajadustega õpilaste õpetamisest. Erinevad uurimused näitavad, et Eesti õpetajate teadmised ATH-st ja ATH-ga õpilaste õpetamisest on piiratud, seega on ATH-ga õpilaste õpetamise teema aktuaalne.

Töö teoreetilises osas antakse teemakohase kirjanduse abil ülevaade ATH sümptomitest ja nende erinevustest poiste ja tüdrukute puhul, ATH-ga õpilaste käitumise eripäradest, ATH põhjustatud raskustest õppimisel ning inglise keele õpetamisest ATH-ga õpilastele.

Töö empiirilises osas käsitletakse kvalitatiivse uurimise meetodit, esitatakse läbiviidud uurimuse tulemused ning analüüsitakse neid. Selgitamaks, kuidas õpetatakse inglise keelt ATH-ga õpilastele Eestis, viidi läbi poolstruktureeritud intervjuud kolme inglise keele õpetajaga, kes õpetavad ATH diagnoosiga õpilasi. Saadud tulemusi võrreldi samal teemal varem läbiviidud uurimuste tulemustega. Läbiviidud intervjuude põhjal selgus, millised on ATH tunnused, milliseid käitumuslikud ja hariduslikud erivajadused on nendest tunnustest tingitud ning kuidas efektiivselt inglise keelt ATH-ga lastele õpetada. Respondentide vastuste põhjal selgusid tulemuslikud ja mittetulemuslikud meetodid ning tähelepanu väärivad aspektid ATH puhul.

Tulemustest selgus, et meetodi efektiivsus või ebaefektiivsus sõltub paljuski ATH-ga õpilaste meeleolust, emotsionaalsest laetusest, erinevatest ärritajatest ja kaaslaste käitumisest. Seega on oluline arvestada, et ATH-ga õpilase õpetamisel ei saa lähtuda ainekesksusest, vaid ATH-ga õpilase puhul peab arvestama tervikliku lähenemisega, mis aitab õpilasest kujundada väärtusi hindavat komplekssete sotsiaalsete oskustega indiviidi. Respondendid rõhutasid, et õpetamiseks on oluline omada õpilase käitumise ja klassi haldamise võtteid. Inglise keele õpetamiseks ATH-ga õpilastele puuduvad spetsiifilised meetodid. Siiski on olemas toimivad strateegiad ja meetodid, mis enamasti töötavad. Õppemeetodi valiku puhul lähtutakse ATH-ga õpilastest (ja nende meeleolust) ning õpieesmärkidest. Tulemustest lähtuvad soovitusel inglise keele õpetajatele on esitatud arutelu järel.

Kokkuvõtteks võib öelda, et vaatamata valimi väiksusele saavutati andmete küllastumine, mis annab alust oletada, et ATH-ga õpilastele inglise keele õpetamise puhul on antud ülevaade tähtsaimatest aspektidest ja inglise keele õppimist toetavatest meetoditest.

Märksõnad: aktiivsus- ja tähelepanuhäire, aktiivsus- ja tähelepanuhäirega õpilased, hariduslikud erivajadused, kohandused, inglise keele didaktika, õppemeetodid

**Lihtlitsents lõputöö reprodutseerimiseks ja lõputöö üldsusele kättesaadavaks tegemiseks**

Mina \_\_\_\_\_MERILEN IVASK\_\_\_\_\_  
 ( autori nimi)  
 (sünnikuupäev: \_\_\_\_\_02.04.1982\_\_\_\_\_) )

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 HYPERACTIVITY DISORDER (ADHD),  
 (lõputöö pealkiri)

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